



food systems for a healthier world

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Testimony – Michigan House Natural Resource Committee (February 9, 2016)
Opposing HB5255

I'm Joe Colyn with the agri-food consultancy Originz, LLC out of Battle Creek where we help clients deliver "***food systems for a healthier world***". Notice that in our tagline we use the comparative adjective "***healthier***". We are never satisfied with the status quo. We believe and act from the position that mankind (society) can best care for creation (the environment) when our economy thrives, and that those interests can be complimentary rather than competitive. We envision a world that's not only sustainable, but one that thrives!

I suggest that HB 5255 is legislation that is both not needed and not wanted. It is not needed because by current interpretation of the Michigan Aquaculture Development Act of 1999 by the State Attorney General, net pen aquaculture cannot be licensed in the Great Lakes. It is not wanted because it would take away any opportunity to leverage the Great Lakes waters for food fish production in the future. We should not be closing the door to that opportunity.

The Science Advisory Panel's report to the Quality of Life agencies makes it clear **that there is an opportunity to develop net pen aquaculture in the Great Lakes when such facilities are properly sited and when an adaptive management approach is taken to their operation to ensure sustainability.** Proper sighting is key and the vast water of our Great Lakes contain areas that could benefit from the restoration of vitality that net pen aquaculture can bring – jobs, fish stocks for the capture and recreational fisheries, thriving working waterfronts, and more.

We know from the experience in Ontario that net pen aquaculture can be done sustainably. In fact the sector has expanded considerably in recent years through both increased feed allocation to existing farms and by expansion of First Nations operations in Lake Huron's north channel and its connected waters. And I urge you – go visit the Ontario farms. When you do, you'll understand how they not only make an economic contribution to society, but also how they provide ecological services in the restoration of depleted water ecosystems. And check out www.originz.com, the aquaculture page (illustration on next page), for a series of videos on the opportunity. Be sure to watch the Kana Upton and Ben Kanasawe clips as they speak from their experience as a biologist and First Nations farm operator respectively. I'd welcome the opportunity to discuss how Originz might help coordinate a field-trip to visit with the Ontario operators – you will find that experience very informative as we establish the required and appropriate regulation for aquaculture in Michigan.

As a co-author of the Integrated Assessment report that outlines the opportunity for aquaculture in the region, let me restate one of our key recommendations, that ***"the preferred future is expected to include all three (production) systems (recirculating aquaculture, flow through, open water cage (net pen) systems) and research will likely identify variants as well as new designs"***. Let's allow the entrepreneurial community and talented workforce we have

in Michigan to explore what the aquaculture sector *CAN* be – including net pens –so we can produce fresh, local, healthy and affordable seafood for the states citizens right here in Michigan.

Shutting down this opportunity before it even has a chance to be explored would be a travesty. This bill should die. It serves no purpose other than needlessly obstructing opportunity.

Thanks you,



Joe Colyn -- Originz, LLC

